



Negotiations Update: 4/25/22 and 4/26/22

The Administration's "Last Best Offer" and What it Means

Monday morning started with the administration's team presenting their 'last best offer,' stating that if UNAC's team didn't accept it, the teams should mutually agree to mediation with a federal mediator. During mediation, [the mediator acts as a neutral third party](#) and goes back and forth, from team to team, to help the two sides reach agreement.

The mediator will typically meet individually with each side, and each side will have to compromise. The mediator will help the UNAC and UA teams develop a contract that, hopefully, both teams can agree to. Mediation is how we reached our current CBA. Mediation sessions will not be open to the public, meaning members will not be able to watch and we may not be able to send out updates until the conclusion of mediation. While this is unfortunate, the federal mediator generally sets the format and ground rules of the mediation, not the parties.

Any contract reached through mediation is not binding, and either team may decline to accept it. If mediation fails and we cannot reach an agreement, we will likely be at the point of taking a strike vote. We hope to avoid this outcome, as it would be disruptive to everyone, most importantly our students.

It is important that we protect academic freedom, improve job security, and have fair and consistent disciplinary processes, along with real gains in compensation to chip away at the decreased spending power that resulted from six years with only a single 1% raise, paired with historic inflation rates. The UNAC negotiation team will continue to work through the summer and will meet in good faith with the mediator and with the administration's team as needed. We will continue to send out updates throughout the summer as developments warrant.

Contents of the Last Best Offer

Academic Freedom

- UA continues to propose language that limits endorsement of [AAUP documents on academic freedom and tenure](#) and on [collegiality \(article 6.3\)](#). They explained

at the table that they've added this limiting language because they are unhappy that UNAC has rightly referred to the AAUP documents in a matter currently in arbitration involving the dismissal of a tenured faculty member.

Non-Tenure Track Bargaining Unit Members

- UA continues to propose the exclusion of postdoctoral fellows in years 1-3 and visiting professors in year 1 from key articles ([9: Faculty Status](#), [13: Workloads](#), [15: Compensation](#)). The administration's bargaining team has provided no compelling justifications for why these bargaining unit members should not have workloads, annual evaluations, minimum salaries or annual compensation increases, but continue to insist on this in their proposals. A [2018 Alaska Labor Relations Agency decision](#) (page 8) clearly states that these faculty belong in our bargaining unit from the first day of employment, just like other members.
- The possibility of multi-year contracts for non-tenure track faculty, but only at the discretion of administrators, and only for research faculty who attain multi-year grants ([Article 9](#)). This proposal leaves out over 200 non-tenure track faculty members who teach and do clinical work for our UA students. Current contract language already allows for this and UNAC continues to advocate for a codified, systematic framework for our non-tenure track members to earn multi-year contracts.
- Added an appeals process for non-tenure track faculty standing for promotion ([Article 9](#)).
- Eliminated the 'five years in rank' requirement for non-tenure track faculty to stand for promotion ([Article 9](#))

Compensation

- 3% increase to minimum salaries, excluding postdocs in their first 3 years ([Article 15](#))
- Salary increases ONLY if the legislature appropriates the money by July 1, 2022; July 1, 2023; July 1, 2024. If the legislative sessions and budget discussions continue past July 1, or if our new CBA isn't TA'd in time, no retroactive salary increases would be allowed, lowering the actual % increase faculty members would earn ([Article 15](#)).
 - FY23: 3%
 - FY24: 2.5%
 - FY25: 2%
- No market increases, including no formerly promised year 2 & 3 of the market adjustment study done several years ago during the Jim Johnsen presidency when many of our members received letters heralding a welcome market salary adjustment. UA canceled the adjustments after the first installment. ([Article 15](#)).
- No equity adjustment funds ([Article 15](#))
- No increases to chair, summer, or overload pay ([Article 15](#))

Benefits

- Increase of pension wage base employer contribution cap from \$42,000 to \$52,000. This is still \$95,000 below the social security wage base cap, meaning everyone making over \$52,000 is getting far lower employer contributions to retirement than they would under the social security system ([Article 16](#)).
- Refusal to include the date for BOR policy regarding [education benefits](#) (04.06.010) or [geographic differentials](#) (04.05.070). This is important because BOR policy can be changed, and if no date is included in the CBA, faculty would

Concessions in Their Package

Furloughs

Thanks to faculty member actions, including participation in our “no furloughs” letter writing campaign and hanging fliers around worksites, as well as student newspapers at UAA and UAS publishing ads against furloughs, the administration’s bargaining team has removed all mention of furloughs from their most recent package proposal. This is all thanks to your actions against adding furloughs to the CBA.

Salary Increases

Again, thanks to faculty member actions, including participation in our “fair compensation” letter writing campaign and hanging fliers around worksites, the administration’s team finally moved a bit on their compensation proposals. As listed above, their proposed salary increases do not come close to matching current inflation rates, but they do show that movement is possible.

Unfortunately, their proposal puts these salary increases at risk by needlessly adding new language that ties the raises to the whims of legislative processes; a dysfunctional legislature that fails to pass a budget by July 1 in FY 24 and 25 would result in lost salary increases for faculty, and if our impending mediation doesn’t wrap up in time for legislative appropriation before July 1, 2022, the administration’s proposed 3% increase will not happen.

Interestingly, President Pitney publicly announced in her [April 25 email to the UA community](#) that staff will also get the raises her team has proposed for UNAC faculty, but only if the new CBA is TA’d and the money is appropriated before July 1. She could put in a budget request at any time for increased staff and faculty raises. It doesn’t have to wait for a new CBA, and staff and faculty don’t need to be tied together. UNAC supports higher wage increases for staff, too, but is not legally empowered to negotiate for them. President Pitney’s proposal proves the research showing that “When union density is high, nonunion workers benefit, too, because unions effectively set broader standards—including higher wages,” ([Economic Policy Institute, December 15, 2021](#)). Perhaps staff should unionize too?

UA Contributions to Pension Plans

As mentioned above, their proposal moved in a positive direction on pension plan contributions from UA, but it still places the cap well below the [current social security cap of \\$147,000](#) and below the average faculty salary of \$84,000.

Progress Since President Pitney’s March 23 email

It’s important to note that in the month of April, we made progress in bargaining by holding off on mediation while trying to reach agreement:

- We TA’d three more articles.
- We will enter mediation without having to agree to their earlier demands that we forgo our legal right under Alaska Statute to consider this as part of the required process leading to a strike vote.
- The administration’s team moved in our direction on salary increases and

We Could Have TA'd at Least One More Article on Tuesday

On Tuesday morning, UNAC's team said we couldn't agree to the administration's last best offer due in part to some of the non-monetary and monetary items their team continues to propose as new language in the CBA.

Since the administration's team had said they would be willing to receive new proposals from UNAC while we wait for mediation, UNAC prepared and presented new proposals on [Article 6](#): Academic Freedom and Responsibility, [Article 10](#): Reduction in Force Due to Discontinuance or Reduction of Program, [Article 11](#): Disciplinary Action, and [Article 17](#): Working Conditions.

Despite our article 10 proposal being *identical* to their latest article 10, which was included in the administration team's latest package proposal, they declined to TA it as a solo article. At that point, it became clear to UNAC's team that the administration's team does not actually want to continue trying to make progress while waiting for a mediator.

As an effort to act in good faith, our team proposed meeting again on May 9 and 10; their team tentatively agreed to May 9 but was reluctant to set any future dates before hearing from the mediator.

The Bottom Line

We all want bargaining to be over. The sessions have been ugly. We want a new contract. However, the new contract has to be one the voting membership will approve, meaning it needs to be fair and competitive, with a better compensation package, inclusion of all bargaining unit members, fair and consistent discipline guidelines, protection of academic freedom and tenure, and better job security for our non-tenure track members.

Our new contract needs to help provide a positive future and ensure that the missions of our universities can be upheld through the essential work faculty perform.

We will continue to bargain, will work with the mediator in good faith, and will pursue next steps if they become necessary. We want to achieve a fair and competitive contract for faculty. Faculty working conditions are student learning conditions.

How You Can Help Your Team

- Keep checking your email over the summer
 - We'll keep communicating with you and will be planning future actions.
 - Be ready to participate!
- Write your own letters to [members of the BOR](#) and [President Pitney](#) related to bargaining issues of concern to you

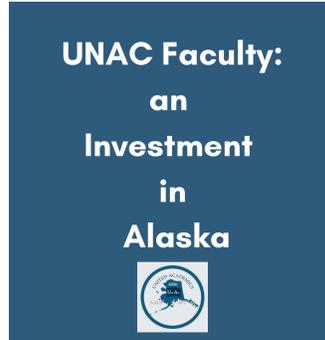
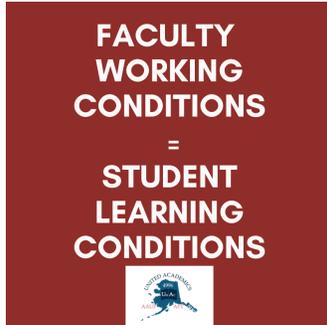
- Plan a local sign-waving event or informational picket with colleagues at your worksite or MAU. Contact your Org VP and/or office staff for guidance and help publicizing
 - The BOR meets in person at UAA on June 2!
- Keep using our [Zoom profile pictures](#) when attending bargaining and other work meetings
- Follow us on social media - share our FB posts and our retweet our Tweets: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)
- Contribute [your own testimony](#) to our social media campaign

Faculty are Essential to the Health and Success of the UA System and the Universities' Missions



**FACULTY WORKING CONDITIONS ARE
STUDENT LEARNING CONDITIONS**

Zoom and Social Media Graphics



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United Academics Local #4996 (UNAC) is the bargaining unit that represents all non-adjunct, full-time faculty at the University of Alaska. UNAC is an affiliate of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

[Visit our Website](#)

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